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SPEECH

MADE

By the Right Honourable,

JOHN,

Earle of BRISTOLL,

In the high Court of

PARLIAMENT.

May 10. 1642.

Concerning an ACCOMMODATION.

By a more perfect copie.



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A SPEECH made by the Right Honorable, *J O H N*, Earle of *Bristol* in the high Court of PARLIAMENT. May 30. 1642.

My Lords,

I Have spoken so often upon the subject of *Accommodation*, with so little acceptance, and with so ill success, that it was in my intention not to have made any further essay in this kind; but my zeale to the peace and happiness of this Kingdome, and my apprehensions of the neere approaching of our unspeakable miseries & calamities, suffer me not to be master of mine own resolutions.

Certainly, this Kingdome hath at all times many advantages over the other Monarchies of *Europe*. As, of Situation, of plenty of rich commodities, of Power both by Sea and Land: But more particularly at this time, when all our neighbouring States are, by their severall interests, so involved in Wars, and with such equality of power, that there is not much likelihood of their mastering one another, nor of having their differences easily compounded. And thereby, we being only admitted to all trades, & to all places: Wealth and Plenty (which follow, where trade flourisheth) are in a manner cast upon us.

I shall not trouble your Lordships by putting you in mind of the great and noble undertakings of our Ancestors: Nor shall I passe higher then the times within mine own remembrance.

Queene Elizabeth was a Princess disadvantageed by her Sex, by her age, and chiefly, by her want of Issue: yet if we shall consider the great effects which were wrought upon most of the States of Christendom by this Nation under her prudent government; (The growth of the Monarchie of *Spain* chiefly by her impeached; The United Provinces by her protected; The French in their greatest miseries relieved; Most of the Princes of *Germany* kept in high respect and reverence towards her and this Kingdome, and the peace and tranquility wherein this Kingdome flourisheth; and which hath been continued downe unto us by the peaceable government of King *James* of blessed memory, and of his now Majesty. untill these late unhappy interruptions) We cannot but judge this Nation equally capable, with any other, of Honour, Wealth and Plenty.

Now,

Now, if in stead of this happy condition, in which we have been, and might be, upon a sober and impartiall inquirie we shall finde our selves to have been for some few yeeres last past involved in so many troubles and distractions, and at the present to be reduced to the very brink of miseries and calamities; It is high time for us to consider by what means we have been brought into them, and by what means it is most probable we may be brought out of them.

This Kingdome never enjoyed so universall a peace, neither hath it any visible enemy in the whole world either Infidel or Christian: Our enemies are onely of our owne house, such as our own dissensions, jealousies, and distractions, have raised up: And certainly where they are found (especially betwixt a King and his people) no other cause of the unhappinesse and misery of a State need to be sought after: For civill discord is a plentifull Source, from whence all miseries and mischiefs flow into a Kingdome.

The Scripture telleth us of the strength of a little City united, and of the instabillity of a Kingdome divided within it selfe; So that upon a prudent inquirie, we may assigne our owne jealousies, and discords, for the chiefe cause of our past and present troubles, and of our future feares.

It must be confessed, that by the counsell and conduct of evill Ministers, the Subject had cause to think their just liberties invaded; And from thence have our former distempers growne: For it is in the body politique of a Monarchie, as in another Naturall body, the health whereof is defined to be, *Partium corporis aqua temperies*, an equall temper of the parts: So likewise, a State is well in health and well disposed, when Sovereigne power and common right are equally ballanced, and kept in an even temper by just and equitable rules.

And truly, (*My Lords*) by the goodnesse of His Majesty, and by the prudent endeavour of the Parliament, this State is almost reduced to that equall, and even temper, and our sicknesse is rather continued out of fancie and conceipt, (I meane, feares and jealousies) then out of any reall distemper or defect.

I well remember, that before the beginning of this Parliament, some Noble Lords presented a Petition unto the King, and in that Petition did set downe all or most of the grievances and distempers of the Kingdome, which then occurred to them. To these (as I conceive) the Parliament have procured from his Majesty such redresses as are to the good satisfaction.

Many other things for the ease, security, and comfort of the subject, have bene by their great industrie, found and propounded; and by his Majesties goodnesse condescended unto. And now we are come so neere the happinesse of being the most free and most settled Nation in the Christian world; Our dangers and miseries will grow greater and neerer unto us every day then other if they be not prevented.

The King on his part offereth to concur with us in the settling of all the liberties and immunities either for the proprietie of our goods, or libertie of our persons; which we have received from our ancestors, or which himselfe hath granted unto us, and what shall yet remaine for the good and comfort of his Subjects, He is willing to hearken to all our just & reasonable propositions: And for the establishing of the true Protestant Religion, he woos us to it: And the wisdom & industry of the Parliament hath now put it in a hopeful way.

The rule of his government, he professeth, shall be, the Lawes of the Kingdome, And for the comforting and securing of us he offereth a more large and more generall pardon; then hath bene granted by any of his Predecessors.

And truly (*My Lords*) This is all, that ever was or can be pretended unto by us.

We, on the other side make profession, That we intend to make His Majestie a glorious King; to endeavour to support his dignity, and to pay unto him that dutie and obedience, which by our Allegiance, severall Oaths, and late Protestations we owe unto him; and to maintaine all his just Regalities and Prerogatives, which I conceive to be as much as his Majestie will expect from us.

So that (*My Lords*) we (being both thus reciprocally agreed of that which in the generall would make both the King & people happy) shall be most unfortunate, if we shall not bring both inclinations and endeavours so to propound and settle particulars, as both King and people may know what will give them mutuall satisfaction, which certainly must be the first step to the settling a right understanding betwixt them. And in this I should not conceave any great difficulty, if it were once put into a way of preparation. But the greatest difficulty, may seeme to be, how that which may be settled and agreed upon may be secured. This is, commonly the last point in Treaties betwixt Princes, and of the greatest nicenesse, But much more betwixt a King and his Subjects, where that confidence and believe which should bee betwixt them, is once lost: And to speake clearly, I feare that this may bee our case, And herein may
consist

consist the chiefeft difficulty of accommodation : For it is much easie to compose differences arising from reason (yea even from wrongs) then it is to satisfie jealousies, which arising out of diffidence and distrust, grow and are varied upon every occasion.

But (My Lords) if there be no endeavours to allay and remove them, they will every day increase and gather strength ; Nay, they are already growne to that height, and the mutuall replies to those direct termes of opposition, That if we make not a present stop, it is to be feared, it will speedily passe further then verball contestations.

I observe in some of His Majesties Answers, a Civill War spoken of. I confesse it is a word of horror to me who have been an eye-witnesse of those unexpressible calamities, that (in a short time) the most plentiful, and flourishing Countries of Europe have been brought unto by an intestine War.

I further observe, that His Majesty protesteth against the miseries that may ensue by a War, and that he is cleare of them. It is true, that a protestation of that kinde is no actuall denouncing of War, but it is the very next degree to it, *Ultima admonitio*, as the Civilians terme it, The last admonition ; So that we are upon the very brinke of our miseries ; It is better keeping out of them, then getting out of them. And in a State the Wisdome of Prevention, is infinite beyond the Wisdome of Remedies. If for the sins of this Nation, these mis-understandings should produce the least Act of Hostility, it is not almost to be beleaved, how impossible it were to put any stay to our miseries : For a civill War admits of none of those Conditions, or Quarter, by which cruelty and blood are amongst other Enemies kept from exuremities ; Nay, if it should but so happen (which God of his goodnesse avert) That mutually Forces, and Armies should be raised, jealousies and Feares would bee so much increased thereby, that an Accommodation would be rendred full of difficulty and length ; and the very charge of maintaining them, (whilst, first a cessation of Armes, and then a generall Accommodation were in treating) the Wealth of the Kingdome would be consumed.

And of this we had lately a costly example, For in those unhappy troubles, betwixt us and *Scotland*, after there was a stop made to any further Acts of Hostility, and a desire of peace expressed on both sides, Commissioners nominated, and all the Articles propounded, yet the keeping of the Armies together for our severall securities, (whilst the cessation at *Rippon*, and the peace at *London* were intreating) cost this Kingdome not much lesse then a million of pounds. And if two Armies bee once on foote here in *England*, either a sudden

encounter must destroy one of them, or the keeping of them both on foot must destroy the Kingdome.

I hope therefore we shall make it our endeavour by moderation, and calmnesse, yet to put a stay to our so near approaching miseries, and that we shall hearken to the wise advice of our Brethren of *Scotland*, in their late Answer to the King and Parliament, wherein they earnestly intreate us, That all means may be forborn which may make the breach wider, and the wound deeper; and that no place be given to the evill Spirit of division, which at such times worketh uncessantly, & reflecteth not: But that the fairest, the most Christian, and compendious way may be taken by so wise a King and Parliament, as may (against all malice and opposition), make his Majesty and his posterity more glorious, and his Kingdome more happy then ever. And in another place they say, That since the Parliament hath thought meet to draw the practice of the Parliament of *Scotland* into example, in point of Declaration: They are confident that the affection of the Parliament will lead them also to the practise of that Kingdome in composing the unhappy differences betwixt his Majesty and them, and (so far as may consist with their Religion, Liberties, and Laws) in giving his Majesty all satisfaction, especially in their tender care of his Royall Person, and of his Princely Greatnesse and Authority.

Certainly (My Lords) this is wise and brotherly advice; And I doubt not but we are all desirous to follow it. We must not then still dwell up, on generals (For generals produce nothing) But we must put this Businesse into a certain way, whereby particulars may be descended unto; And the way that I shall offer with all humility is, That there may be a select Committee of choice persons of both Houses, who may, in the first place, truly state and set down all things in difference betwixt the King and the Subject, with the most probable way of reconciling them. Secondly, to descend unto the particulars, which may be expected by each from other, either in point of our supporting of him, or his relieving of us. And lastly, how all these Conditions, being agreed upon, may be so secured, as may stand with the honour of His Majesty, and the satisfaction of the Subject.

When such a Committee shall have drawne up the heads of the Propositions, and the way of securing them, they may be presented unto the Houses, and so offered unto His Majesty by such a way as the Parliament shall judge most probable to produce an Accommodation.

(My Lords) What I have yet said unto you, hath been chiefly grounded upon the apprehensions and feares of our future dangers. I shall say something

something of the unhappinesse of our present estate, which certainly standeth in as much need of reliefe and remedy, as our feares doe of prevention; For, although the King and People were fully united, and that all men that now draw severall waies, should unanimously set their hand to the work, yet they would finde it no easie taske to restore this Kingdom to a prosperous & comfortable condition: If we take into our consideration the deplorable estate of *Ireland*, likely to drain this Kingdom of men and treasure; If we consider the Debts and necessity of the Crown, the engagements of the Kingdome, the great and unusuall contributions of the people, the which, although they may not be so much to their discontent (for that they have been legally raised) yet the burthen hath not been much eased: Let us likewise consider the distractions (I may almost call them confusions) in point of Religion; which of all other distempers are most dangerous and destructive to the peace of a State.

Besides these publique calamities, let every particular man consider the distracted discomfortable estate of his own condition, for mine owne part, I must ingenuously professe unto your Lordships, That I cannot finde out (under the different Commands of the King and the Parliament) any such course of caution and warinesse, by which I can promise to my self security or safety. I could give your Lordships many instances of the inconsistency and impossibility of obeying these commands: But I shall trouble you with only one or two.

The Ordinance of Parliament (now in so great agitation) commandeth all persons in Authority, to put it in execution, and all others to obey it according to the Fundamentall Laws of the Land; The King declareth it to be contrary to the Fundamentall Laws, against the Subject, and Rights of Parliament; And commandeth all his Subjects of what degree soever upon their allegiance not to obey the said Ordinance, as they will answer the contrary at their perils.

So likewise in point of the King, commanding the attendance of divers of us upon His Person whereunto We are obliged by severall relations of our services and oaths, In case We comply not with his Commands, We are lyable to his displeasure, and the losse of those places of Honour and Trust, which we hold under Him: If We obey his Commands without the leave of the Parliament, (which hath not beene alwayes granted) We are liable to the censure of Parliament; And of both these We want not fresh examples; So that certainly, this cannot but be acknowledged to be an unhappy, and uncomfortable condition.

I am sure I bring with me a ready and obedient heart, to pay unto the
King

King all those duties of loyalty, allegiance, and obedience which I owe unto him; And I shall never be wanting towards the Parliament, to pay unto it all those due Rights, and that obedience which we all owe unto it. But in contrary commands a conformity of obedience to both, is hardly to be lighted on. The Reconciliation must be in the Commands, and the Commands, and not in the obedience, or the person that is to obey. And therefore shall I shall please God to bless us with a right understanding betwixt the King and Parliament, and a conformity in their Commands, neither the Kingdome in publike, nor particular men in private can be reduced to a safe or comfortable Condition.

I have said thus much to give occasion to others, to offer likewise their opinions; For if we shall sit still, and nothing (tending to the stay of the unhappy misunderstanding namely betwixt the K. & his people) be propounded: It is to be feared, That our miseries will hasten so fast upon us, that the season and opportunity of applying remedies may be past.

I have herein discharged my conscience, futable to that duty which I owe to the King my Sovereign and Master, and futable to that zeale and affection, which I shall ever pay to the happinesse and prosperity of the Kingdome, towards which I shall ever faithfully contribute my humble prayers, and honest endeavours. And I shall no way doubt (whatsoever successe this my proposition my have) it will be accompanied with the good wishes of your Lordships, and of all peaceable, and well minded men.

FINIS.

